UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1996/578
22 July 1996
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 18 JULY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the attached letter, dated 17 July 1996, addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, concerning the continued military activities by the Turkish armed forces in the territory and airspace of the Republic of Iraq, on the pretext of pursuing elements of the Kurdish Workers' Party.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

[Original: Arabic]

Letter dated 17 July 1996 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to my letter to you of 28 May 1996, issued as document S/1996/401, and wish to inform you that the Turkish armed forces are continuing their military operations in the territory and airspace of the Republic of Iraq on the pretext of pursuing elements of the Kurdish Workers' Party. These acts of aggression by Turkey not only constitute an infringement of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq but are also a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of all the rules and principles which govern relations between States, particularly neighbouring States.

These Turkish aggressions against Iraqi territory have continued since my above-mentioned letter to you, as follows:

1. On 31 May 1996, Turkish helicopters bombarded border villages in northern Iraq, causing serious material damage.

2. On 2 June 1996, the Turkish army deployed its forces in the area of Atrush in two strategic positions in Markun and Azly.

3. On 4 June 1996, Turkish aircraft bombarded the area of Katiya in the Shildazy sector, causing human casualties and material damage.

4. On 15 June 1996, Turkish army forces erected mobile bridges on the Bikufah, Dayraluk and Kaly Balanda rivers.

5. On 25 June 1996, at 7 p.m., Turkish military helicopters violated Iraqi airspace and bombarded the village of Layrah in the area of Shirwan Mazin in Mirga Sur district, wounding two people and damaging the houses of a number of citizens; at the same time, the Turkish artillery also bombarded other villages in the area, causing material damage.

6. On 27 June 1996, Turkish troops estimated at two brigades of special forces, reinforced by groups of village guards and by special detachments, and supported by Cobra helicopters, crossed Iraq's international frontier from an area south of Shamandli district in Turkey, passing through the areas of Sabandra, Buntih, Satih and Miruz, on the pretext of pursuing elements of the Kurdish Workers' Party of Turkey.

7. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees stated in its urgent note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (No. 546 of 3 July 1996) that on 2 July 1996, at about 6 a.m., four Turkish warplanes dropped six illumination flares, four of which fell on the Atrush camp for Turkish refugees, who number 14,000 (56 per cent of them children), causing great alarm among them; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner in Baghdad, which runs the camp, reported the incident to UNHCR headquarters in Geneva.

As I stated in my previous letter to you, the Government of Turkey bears full international responsibility for these hostile acts inside Iraqi territory and for all their consequences, irrespective of the excuses claimed.

While the Government of Iraq maintains its legitimate right under international law to claim compensation for the damage caused by these Turkish violations and infringements of its territory and airspace, it renews its appeal to the Government of the Republic of Turkey, through you, to review its policy with respect to the situation in northern Iraq and to establish cooperation between our two neighbouring countries based on considerations of good-neighbourliness and mutual respect for the sovereignty which Iraq cherishes. This would provide a means of resolving this grave situation in the interests of both countries and in accordance with their wish to establish security and stability in the region, thus giving effect to their peoples' longing for prosperity and progress.

The abnormal situation created by the United States of America in northern Iraq and its deployment of the United States and British forces in Turkish territory in Operation Poised Hammer prevents our two neighbouring countries from reaching a settlement of the issues which trouble their good-neighbourly relations and which also threaten international peace and security in the region and in the world as a whole.

While reiterating my country's appeal to our Turkish neighbour, through you, to respect the sovereignty of Iraq and the inviolability of its territory, I hope that the Security Council will assume the responsibility conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security and to prevent the continuance of the threat and aggression to which my country is constantly being exposed.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Iraq